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ART AS RELATED TO MANUAL TRAINING¹

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It is my purpose to make clear two points: First, that art and manual training, as expressed in private, municipal, and national life, are one and inseparable, and consequently should be so presented in the industrial-arts courses for our public schools. Second, I shall attempt to show specifically what phases of art and manual training may be correlated naturally and advantageously.

This paper assumes that both art and manual training constitute essential branches in the courses of study of our elementary and secondary schools. The direct question before us is: Are they distinct branches having few common points of contact, or are they fundamentally related?

The answer cannot be safely settled by referring to texts on the subject; neither should opinions of successful teachers of the individual subjects be wholly relied upon, unless perchance they aim far beyond the technique and organization of school work. Rather let us look out broadly upon the necessities of the industrial world, and feel the pulsing needs of American institutional life, if we would answer the question rationally.

To be more specific, it must be admitted that, on the one hand, there may be a few individualistic artists whose work is so highly specialized as to be wholly unrelated to structural elements; and, on the other hand, there may be mechanics whose work does not, and need not, partake of any artistic feeling. It seems to me, however, that such specialists have no more right to expect that a technical preparation for their callings be given in the elementary schools than the lawyer has to expect a training sufficient to plead a case of criminality in the courts, or the surgeon that all pupils be qualified to treat a case of appendicitis, or the clergyman to request that each child be able to expound the doctrine of the Trinity.

¹ Read before the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association, Louisville, Ky., March 1, 1906.

In the past the manual-training movement in this country emphasized highly specialized technical and accuracy features as essential elements of a preparation for a few specific forms of handicraft. Likewise much of art in the schools has been and still is a series of drawings arranged in such sequence as eventually, after many years of effort, to prepare the pupil for some specific phase of so-called "refined art." The teacher who hopes to guide educational thought today must feel the relation of his specific branch to the world's work. Admitting the narrow specializing aims of art and manual training in the past, it is but just to say that they approached the educational idea as closely as other school branches; for we not only claimed, and could prove by the theories of the pioneer psychologists, that manual training and art trained all the faculties at one sweep, but we also invented some new, artistic, and mechanical faculties which were developed simultaneously with the commonly accepted list.

With such narrow and undemocratic ideals, and with such an inadequate theory of the aim of education, it was impossible fully to comprehend the fundamental relations which naturally combined the arts and crafts into a broad, unifying, educational movement.

Today the educational ideal has shifted. We look not so much to textbooks, not to the teacher, not to the rich heritage of the past; rather, we look out broadly upon the many needs of society, and to the great industrial and commercial enterprises, if we would know just what is best to teach.

The thoughts contained in texts, the ideas of the pedagogue, and the ideals of past generations are to be accepted only as they serve to fulfil society's present plans for physical, intellectual, and religious attainments and needs.

From this broad social standpoint let us first consider the arts, then the crafts, and then their union as expressed in private and public needs; and lastly the relations of the two in school as a preparation for, and as participation in, this private and public life.

In the past there has been an almost superstitious reverence for the highly specialized talents of the artist. Someone has described the artist as "heaven-taught;" for it is he that has led us to see and appreciate the beauties of ocean, of mountain, and of God's grandest works.

When the artist really does lead us through his work to a nearer

view, and a higher appreciation of the exquisite harmonies and beauties of nature, his work may indeed be styled heaven-taught, and even heavenly; and he may be given credit for living up to his highest religious and educational ideals. Too often, however, we see the painter of the picture glorified, rather than the works of the Creator which inspired the artist and thus made the painting possible. We have a suggestion here of the true nature and mission of art. Art fulfils its highest mission only when it leads us to a higher appreciation of the beauties of nature, whether they be inanimate, animate, or human. A taste for things beautiful in nature, a refined and delicate feeling of pleasure in the sunset, the woods, the mountain streams, and a sympathy for nature's creatures, are among the highest ideals of art instruction.

When fine art becomes separated from all other arts, when fine art ceases to be an integral part of the thoughts, actions, and inner being of the individual, its grace, charm, and effectiveness are lost.

Instruction in fine arts is the creation of an atmosphere in which the student breathes, moves, and performs every detail of his life's work. Fine art should affect our taste for nature, for literature, for music, for high companionship, and, in fact, for everything that may be made lovely and holy.

Art is not a subject to be isolated from all other subjects, and then subdivided into its various parts for special study and arrangement; but rather a charming appreciation of all things beautiful, at all times, and in all places. Consider for a moment the broad influence of art in the modern home. Notice the simplicity of lines in the woodwork and furniture; notice the color scheme of carpets, rugs, tapestry, wall-paper, and decorations. While there are many things in one room, the harmonious blending of colors and of simple decorations impresses one with a unity and simplicity that are exquisitely pleasurable. The darker tones of the floor gradually lighten to the soft tints of the ceiling, producing a quietude in the individual similar to that felt when nature supplies the restful dark green beneath, the woods and mountains in the background, and the light-blue sky above.

An attempt to separate clearly the arts from the crafts in such a home would mean annihilation to both. Without the delicate artistic touches to the structural and ornamental elements, there would be

little need or appreciation for much of the craftsman's work. Reciprocally, without the constructions of manufacturer and craftsman, how and where may the artist express his feelings or display his talents?

The union of arts and crafts is displayed in every department of a modern home; from the drawing-room to the kitchen, the principles of harmony, simplicity, and beauty are expressed by the correlated work of the artist and the artisan.

This correlation is strikingly manifested also in private, municipal, and national enterprises, though what has been accomplished is a very small part of what is to be. Elaborate preparations are on foot in many of our cities to adopt a style of architecture adapted to the climate and most fitting the natural environment; also to give such cities an arrangement of public buildings that will add architectural beauty, and at the same time suit the convenience of the public. The conception of artistic civic centers, with landscape gardening, boulevards, and parks, is growing in popularity every day, and evidences in a profound way the increasing public demand and appreciation for the union of arts and handicrafts. In many of our American cities the union of the beautiful and the useful is being expressed in every detail coming under municipal control. We find artistic feeling expressed even in the poles and fixtures for electric and gas lights, in billboards, shop fronts, fire-alarm boxes, plates naming the streets, letter-boxes, electric-light signs, pavements, fountains, monuments, and the arrangement of steps, flowers, shrubs, trees, and lawns.

Striking examples of this harmonious blending of the arts and crafts may be found in public buildings, such as the Boston Public Library and the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot at San Antonio, Tex. The latter has an entrancing architectural charm, and seems to bespeak the climate, history, and character of the Texan people. The simplicity, beauty, and unity expressed by the Boston Public Library are beyond description. One can simply breathe the atmosphere and receive the inspirations. Every minute spent within its walls only enhances the ennobling influences which administer to the spiritual emotion.

In government buildings, such as the Congressional Library and the new San Francisco Post-Office, we see indications of a growing national desire for the correlation of hand crafts and arts. Though

these national buildings may not fully satisfy our ideals for unity and simplicity, nevertheless, when viewing them, the æsthetic element dominates ones feelings.

At the Louisiana Exposition much of the so-called arts and crafts was exhibited in the Palace of Fine Arts. Porcelain, glass and metal-work, textiles, and household furnishings were awarded honors and prizes on equal terms with paintings and sculpture. It is gratifying to note this national approval of the art-craft movement. It would seem in place not to ask the following questions: Should teachers of art or of manual training ignore the official position of the government in this matter? Should they ignore the desires and needs of society? Should art be taught largely for art's sake, and manual training largely for the sake of manual training; or should they both be taught wholly for the pupil's sake, and for the sake of society which we serve?

It is unfortunate that teachers of art and manual training have been slow to recognize each other's virtues; for the work of either is essential to the welfare of the other. If the fault lies unevenly, it would seem to rest on the side of those who are mechanically inclined. The all-important thing at present is to harmonize these elements, and thus secure a reciprocal influence between art and construction. The most useful things are artistic, and the most artistic things are in the highest sense useful.

The artistic project is becoming the ideal of the artisan, while usefulness and fitness are being recognized by artists as concomitants of the beautiful. This meeting upon common ground of art and industry is due in no small measure to our changed and changing notions of education, thoroughness, and specialization. The specialist of today is not that person who knows one thing and only one thing, but rather that person who knows one thing in relation to all other things to which it is in some way related.

There is no adverse criticism of the artist who wishes to make a shelf or plant and care for a flower garden; on the contrary, we credit him with being an artist of the broader sort. The artisan in the same way is considered a more proficient man if he gives a touch of beauty to the form and color of his work.

The present tendency to introduce art and manual training into the already crowded curriculum of our public schools is due to this

broader view of education, thoroughness, and culture. Both these subjects touch in a vital way the very heart-strings of every boy, girl, man, and woman. Each of these branches is related in some way to every other subject in the curriculum, and by denying either of them a place in the course of study we only weaken that course, and consequently the pupil; for we are thereby cutting off the full supply of experience which give life and motive to the thoughts and actions of normal children.

The school-teacher who objects to art and manual training, on the ground that there is not even time to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic thoroughly, is like the farmer who spent all his time plowing, harrowing, irrigating, and fertilizing; but, as he never found time to do these things thoroughly and perfectly, he therefore objected to planting any seed. This school work that is always *getting ready* for life, and forever says to the child, "Don't touch life till you are thoroughly prepared by studying textbooks," is like the experience of the farmer who refused to plant seeds until the propitious time had passed, or like the boy who was trying to swim before venturing into the water.

I have little patience with that form of education which is based wholly upon a preparation for life. If school work is not life, and life work, it is not worthy the name of education. Education means life. "I have come that ye may have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." The life of every boy and every girl is an unfolding, a growth, a participation in some form of life's duties; and the process is internal application, not external. We have looked upon the child too much as we should a watch with all its wheels, springs, screws, and cogs, thinking that, as the watch-maker may adjust and lubricate till the perfect timepiece is produced, just so the teacher may force his ideas and impressions upon the child, regardless of the child's aptitudes, previous experiences, or attainments. If this theory were true, we should have found the perfect man long ago. We shall make educational progress faster and more naturally by thinking of the child rather as a plant which does and must develop largely according to its natural inclinations. We can nourish, protect, and guide, but we cannot safely force either the growth of the plant or the development of the child.

As a means of natural unfolding and self-expression we find both

art and manual training to be safe and reliable agents. The correlation of these two subjects is the great need of each. This cannot be done by discussing the relative merits of each, nor by emphasizing the strong characteristic features of one for the benefit of improving the other. What we must do is to seek common ground, and work together along the line of least resistance for common ideals. We have already shown that there are certain fields of educational work, and of industrial enterprises, and of practical, everyday affairs which look to both art and mechanical skill for their highest and richest realization of success. Speaking broadly, we find that even remote and apparently unrelated branches, such as music, poetry, and literature, are dependent in no small way upon fine arts for a full and complete interpretation. The mechanical element, likewise, is necessary for any expression of cadence and rhythm in either poetry or music.

It is in the field of industrial arts that hand skill and fine arts are obviously related and interdependent. In the preparation and serving of foods, in the planning and making of clothing, in the construction of homes, business houses, means of transportation, and in the various other conveniences serving the æsthetic and practical needs of man, we find the common ground referred to, the workable field for both fine arts and manual training.

In considering the various sub-topics coming under the general heading "industrial arts," we find some lines—such as pottery, basketry, and metal-work—lending themselves most naturally to the artistic designer. There are other lines—such as textiles, cardboard, and wood-work, offering many limitations; while still other lines—such as joinery and machine-shop work—admit of every little art expression.

Let us consider what phases of art are best suited to manual-training courses. Both applied design and art interpretations may well serve the manual teacher; for the former deals with the size, form, and color of constructions, and the latter allows a universal application of art principles.

It is evident that other important lines of art—such as a study of pictures, of the life and works of artists, of historical and inspirational masterpieces, as well as the production of pure or modified representation—are less intimately related to structural work.

That branch of art known as "design" seems, then, to be most vitally related to hand-work. Indeed, it is an essential part of that work; for it deals not only with decoration, but also with construction and arrangements of parts. By "design" I mean the "conception and expression of form and color ideas, including all kinds of construction, arrangement, and decoration." The main purposes of design are to secure unity, simplicity, and beauty; the specific principles of balance, rhythm, harmony, variations, etc., are also to be ever kept in mind.

Every design must be influenced by, and must conform to, the ideas of *use* to which the thing is to be put, to the essential structure, to the materials of which it is to be made, and to its surroundings. It is in these last ideas that the artist finds his greatest difficulties, when trying to assist the manual-training work. The art teacher who has never made a basket can hardly be expected to direct the work in designing baskets. The same difficulties arise in designing for sewing, bent-iron work, cabinet-making, or any other line of hand-work.

The question naturally arises: Where may the teacher be found who is at once artist and mechanic? One rarely finds an artist with the accurate training of a mechanic; the artist rather deploras accuracy, as being destructive to art. On the other hand, how few technological students find real pleasure in fine arts; they rather look upon artists as visionary persons, who have a superstitious reverence for beautiful forms and color.

Occasionally we find an artist who sees how art may be applied to the work of securing and making food, clothing, and shelter, in such a way as to administer to the æsthetic feelings as well as to the material comforts of man. Occasionally, too, we see a manual-training teacher taking fine-arts courses, and getting the appreciation and spirit of art, perhaps as a controlling influence over all he sees, and hears, and thinks.

While we are expressing our desires and ideals concerning the simultaneous teaching of hand-work and art, the fact still remains that the artist-artisan who is at once an artisan-artist is rarer than the four-leafed clover, I might say, after the frost.

What education wants today are men and women who are well balanced in these two related subjects, who appreciate both, and who can teach both without under- or overestimating either.

The teacher of design should fully understand the limitations of material to be used. Such knowledge is impossible to one who has not had much experience in the manipulation of substances involved in manual-training courses. The teacher of hand-work has the limitations of material well defined; he usually has his ideas of design well defined also; too well, in fact, for the straight edge and compasses are still used at the expense of free-hand designs, and consequently the æsthetic element is not given its rightful place.

It is practically impossible for the art teacher and the manual-training teacher fully to agree upon the design and structure of a given project, and this lack of agreement indicates the desirability of securing a teacher who is well balanced in designing and construction. Such combined qualifications, as has been pointed out before, are rarely found in one teacher. And this indicates the crux of the whole matter. When our training schools and colleges can send out well-balanced teachers of the arts and crafts—teachers who understand both, and teachers who love to teach both—the question before us now will not be a difficult one to solve. This does not mean that teachers without training in each line should be forced to teach both; for if the teacher is an artist, it is futile to try to get an exact balance of the two. If the teacher is a mechanic, the same is true. Let the teacher teach that which he loves, that which he feels and lives in, that which he has the power to enthuse his pupils with, and to give them a thirst for more.

To state briefly our conclusions:

1. Art and manual training are fundamentally related, and should be so considered in elementary and secondary schools.
2. In all lines of industrial arts hand-work and design may be advantageously correlated.
3. The double purpose of this correlation is to elevate and refine the work of the artisan, and at the same time to make the artist's work practical and essential.
4. From the pupil's standpoint, this correlation gives interest, reason, and motive to both art and hand-work.
5. Lastly, the ideal is to make of every teacher artist an artisan-artist, and of every teacher artisan an artist-artisan.